

"The Discipline of Love; the sin of self-containment"

Yesterday the text spoke touched on the discipline of silence. "Be still and know that I am God."  
~~But there is more than one discipline in the rhythm of the Christian life.~~ But some of you were honest enough to confess to me that in spite of the Psalmist's ~~own~~ admonition, silence just doesn't do much for you. It doesn't turn your mind to God at all.

Take heart. There is more than one discipline in the rhythm of the Christian life. Not everybody can be a Trappist monk. And Peter <sup>with</sup> Paul ~~was~~ are best known for their silences. Peter is better known for speaking too quickly. And Paul, perhaps for speaking too long - like some theologians I have known.

The Bible in its balanced way has <sup>Sometimes</sup> both comfort and warning for all kinds of Christians. Yesterday ~~we~~ let it warn the thundering prophet through the quiet priest. "Be still." ~~But something it~~ <sup>today</sup> ~~let~~ us look the other way. For quietism has just as many dangers as activism. Perhaps I should say the same danger, ultimately: self. Luther "I am more afraid of myself, than of the Pope + all his cardinals. For I have within me, the great pope, self." There is the enemy, self. So as yesterday we examined ourselves for traces of the besetting sin of the activist - self-assertion; today look at yourselves for stains of the other besetting sin, the sin of the quietist: self-containment.

Place against the phrase of the Psalmist, "Be still and know that I am God," these words of I John:

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves, is born of God, and knows God."

Yesterday - "Be still and know God." Today - "Love, and know God."  
When the discipline of silence, <sup>fails. You</sup> ~~and~~ the discipline of love.

Hymn  
Ps. 40 - Sal. 67  
I John 4:1-12

## "Love + Self-Containment"

Some of you were honest enough to confess to me yesterday that in spite of what the Psalmist says, silence just doesn't do much for you - in the way of knowing God, that is. I find it awkward myself. But sometimes necessary, and sometimes very helpful.

Moreover, when God says "Be still" - he means more than physical silence. He is speaking of an end to rebellion. Man's rebellion against God.

Besides there are more positive ways to know God. If silence won't work, try love. This is what the first letter of John is talking about.

He begins more academically, & theologically. He begins doctrinally - with a test for the prophets. The spirit-possessed true prophet will confess that Christ has come in the flesh, that ~~the~~ Son of God ~~is the~~ <sup>is the</sup> ~~man~~ Son of Man (how curious that today's test of orthodoxy is just the reverse!).

But not always. There are times when silence only turns the mind in on itself - or turns it completely off. There is the silence of the womb, and the silence of the tomb, and neither is fit symbol for the Christian life. Both are ~~too~~ self-contained, - and ~~this~~ is the fatal sin of the quietist, as self-assertion is the fatal sin of the activist.

The Silences, ~~of prayer~~ <sup>of prayer</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> not the only way to know God. ~~When the Psalmist says, "Be still and know that I am God."~~ ~~Our text is I Jn.~~ There are also the labors of love. ~~I John I John~~ puts it negatively this way, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love, does not know God, for God is love."

Some of you were honest enough to confess to me yesterday that in spite of what the Psalmist says [Be still, and know that I am God], silence just doesn't do it for you. It doesn't turn your mind to God at all. It only turns it in on yourself - and makes you awkwardly self-conscious.

John says that there is another way to know God - <sup>the way of love.</sup> 1 Jn. 4:7  
Take heart. The gospel still has good news for you. <sup>You see,</sup> ~~and~~ there are just as many dangers to quietism, as to activism. In neither necessarily leads to God, and both lead all too easily back to self. <sup>With me, the sin is</sup> ~~the fatal sin of the~~ <sup>the sin of the activist</sup> ~~activist~~ is self-assertion; <sup>with the other the sin</sup> ~~the fatal sin of the quietist~~ is self-containment. The enemy is always self - and don't think you get away from it either by <sup>radical</sup> relevant activism, or your quiet, conservative piety. The great enemy is always there. Luther - "I am more afraid of my own self -"

~~It is just as fatal~~ Self-containment is quite as fatal as self-assertion. ~~It partakes of the very essence of sin~~ Both are of the very essence of sin - a love of self that crowds out love of God, and love of neighbor. This sin of self-containment